

Message Text

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SUBJECT: KRAFT ARTICLE IN WASHINGTON POST MARCH 16, 1978

FOR ATTENTION AMBASSADOR WARNKE

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF ARTICLE BY JOSEPH KRAFT WHICH
APPEARED IN WASHINGTON POST ON THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 1978:

BEGIN TEXT: HAWKS HOPE THAT THE HARD TIME THEY HAVE GIVEN
THE ADMINISTRATION ON THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES WILL BUILD
A BARRIER AGAINST EARLY CONCLUSION OF A NEW ARMS-CONTROL
AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIA. BUT THEY ARE WRONG. IN A SERIES
OF RECENT WHITE HOUSE MEETINGS, PRESIDENT CARTER HAS DE-
CIDED TO GO STRONG AND FAST FOR A SECOND STRATEGIC ARMS
LIMITATION TREATY TO REPLACE THE AGREEMENT THAT EXPIRED
LAST FALL.

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- THREE CONSIDERATIONS HAVE PROVED DECISIVE IN THE
PRESIDENT'S MIND. FIRST, IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE IS NO
INTRINSIC LINKAGE BETWEEN PANAMA AND SALT. IN FACT, IT IS
NOT A MATTER OF APPLES AND ORANGES; IT'S MORE LIKE
GRAPEFRUIT AND PEANUT BUTTER.

- PANAMA CENTERS ON A VESTIGE OF THE COLONIAL PAST. THE CANAL ITSELF HAS DIMINISHING STRATEGIC AND COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE. IT IS OF VITAL INTEREST ONLY TO A TINY COUNTRY THAT DOES NOT POSE, AND CAN NEVER POSE, A THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES.

- SALT, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS CENTRAL TO THIS COUNTRY'S RELATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION, THE ONLY OTHER SUPERPOWER IN THE WORLD. A SECOND SALT ACCORD WILL KEEP THE DOOR OPEN FOR FURTHER LIMITATION OF ARMS, AND FOR MORE COOPERATION IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE.

- THE WHITE HOUSE CALCULATES THAT IF THERE IS NO AGREEMENT, THE STRATEGIC ARMS BUDGETS FOR RUSSIA AND THE UNITED STATES WILL EACH RISE BY ONE-THIRD WITHOUT EITHER SIDE ATTAINING A SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGE. A PAINFULLY ESTABLISHED SYSTEM OF MONITORING, CONSULTATION AND VERIFICATION WOULD GO BY THE BOARDS. THE VISIBLE AGING OF PRESIDENT LEONID BREZHNEV, AND UNCERTAINTY REGARDING HIS SUCCESSOR, PUTS AN ADDED PREMIUM ON GETTING AN AGREEMENT NOW.

- THE MORE SO AS THE RUSSIANS HAVE PROVED FLEXIBLE AND FORTHCOMING IN THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS THAT FOLLOWED THE BASIC BREAKTHROUGH MADE IN THE MEETINGS BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER ANDREI GROMYKO
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LAST FALL. SINCE THEN, THERE HAS BEEN SOVIET MOVEMENT ON SEVERAL ISSUES.

- THE RUSSIANS HAVE ACCEPTED AMERICAN PROPOSALS ALLOWING FOR THE TESTING OF CRUISE MISSILES. THEY HAVE VOLUNTARILY EXTENDED THE RANGE OF 600 KILOMETERS, PREVIOUSLY AGREED UPON FOR LAND-BASED AND SEA-BASED CRUISE MISSILES, TO THE 2,500 KILOMETERS ACCEPTED FOR WEAPONS ON HEAVY BOMBERS.

- THE RUSSIANS HAVE ACCEPTED AN AMERICAN PROPOSAL THAT THEY NEITHER PRODUCE, TEST NOR DEPLOY A MOBILE MISSILE -- THE SS-16-- FOR THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF THE TREATY.

-- THEY HAVE ACCEPTED AN AMERICAN PROPOSAL THAT THERE BE AN EXCHANGE OF DATA BASES IN ORDER TO ENHANCE EACH SIDE'S KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT THE OTHER IS DOING -- A SIGNIFICANT BREAK WITH SOVIET PRECEDENT. ALREADY THERE HAS BEGUN AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON NUMBERS OF CERTAIN KINDS OF MISSILES AND PLANES. CONTRARY TO ONE PUBLISHED REPORT, NO SERIOUS HITCHES HAVE YET DEVELOPED IN THAT EXCHANGE.

- THE RUSSIANS HAVE ALSO ACCEPTED AN AMERICAN PROPOSAL AS TO WHAT KIND OF LAUNCHERS ARE TO BE COUNTED AS HAVING MULTIPLE-WARHEAD MISSILES, OR MIRV'S. THAT SHOULD EASE TREMENDOUSLY THE VERIFICATION PROBLEM OF DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN WHICH WEAPONS SYSTEMS HAVE MULTIPLE MISSILES AND WHICH DO NOT.

- A NUMBER OF OUTSTANDING ISSUES, TO BE SURE, REMAIN UNSETTLED. THERE IS NO AGREEMENT YET ON WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE ANY EXCEPTIONS TO A GENERAL BAN ON NEW TYPES OF LAND-BASED MISSILES. NOR IS THERE AGREEMENT ON RUSSIA'S BACKFIRE BOMBER. DEFINING CRUISE MISSILE RANGES CONTINUES TO BE A PROBLEM, AS DOES THE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE ISSUE

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OF TRANSFERRING AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY ON CRUISE MISSILES TO THE ALLIES.

- BUT THE CHIEF AMERICAN NEGOTIATOR, PAUL WARNKE, HAS RETURNED TO GENEVA FROM A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT TO WORK ON THESE ISSUES. AMBASSADOR ANATOLIY DOBRYNIN IS RETURNING TO MOSCOW SOON WITH ASSURANCES THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WANTS TO KEEP WORKING WITH RUSSIA WHEREVER COOPERATION IS FEASIBLE.

- THE ADMINISTRATION HOPE IS THAT A GENERAL ACCORD CAN BE REACHED IN GENEVA SOMETIME BEFORE SUMMER. A FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE MOST TOUCHY ISSUES -- NOTABLY THE BACK-FIRE BOMBER -- WOULD PROBABLY BE RESERVED FOR A SUMMIT MEETING WITH CARTER AND BREZHNEV.

- THE TREATY WILL THEN BE PUT TO THE SENATE BEFORE THE ELECTIONS. FOR THE PRESIDENT'S CALCULATION IS THAT THE AGREEMENT SHAPING UP IS A WINNER, A TONIC FOR THE ADMINISTRATION THAT WILL PUT THE HAWKS IN THE DIFFICULT POSITION OF OPPOSING PEACE. END TEXT. VANCE

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